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***AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS***

Please amend the claims as indicated hereafter (where underlining “\_” denotes additions and strikethrough “-” denotes deletions).

***Claims:***

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus comprising:  
a receiver for receiving a first message over a first shared-communications channel, wherein said first message comprises:
  - (i) a notification that said first shared-communications channel has been reserved, and
  - (ii) one or more values that define
    - (a) a first reservation offset time interval ~~during which a second shared-communications channel is reserved upon the conclusion of which a~~ a first signal is transmitted, and
    - (b) a second reservation duration time interval ~~during which a first signal is transmitted during which a first-shared communication channel and a second-shared communication channel are reserved, and upon the conclusion of which the transmission of the first signal over the combination of said first shared-communications channel and said second shared-communications channel is ended,~~ wherein said second time interval is after said first time interval; and  
a transmitter for transmitting, within said first time interval, a second signal over said first shared-communications channel.
2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said first message is also received by a station that always transmits via one shared-communications channel at a time, and wherein said notification causes said station to refrain from transmitting until after said second time interval.

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3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said transmitter is also for transmitting, after said second time interval, a third signal over the combination of a plurality of shared-communications channels.

4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 3 wherein said transmitter is also for, prior to transmitting said third signal, transmitting sequentially over each of said plurality of shared-communications channels a respective message for reserving that shared-communications channel.

5. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said transmitter is also for, prior to receiving said first message:

transmitting over each of a plurality of shared-communications channels a  
respective message for reserving that shared-communications channel; and  
transmitting a third signal over the combination of said plurality of shared-communications channels.

6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said receiver is also for receiving, during said first time interval, a second message over said second shared-communications channel associated with reserving said second shared-communications channel.

7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a processor for:  
sending signals to said transmitter, receiving signals from said receiver, and  
executing a contention-based protocol prior to said transmitter transmitting said  
second signal over said first shared-communications channel.

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said second signal comprises a data message.

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9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said second signal comprises a reservation message for reserving said first shared-communications channel during a third time interval; and wherein said third time interval is after said second time interval; and wherein said transmitter is also for:

transmitting, within said first time interval, a third signal over said second shared-communications channel for reserving said second shared-communications channel during said third time interval, and

transmitting, within said third time interval, a fourth signal over the combination of said first shared-communications channel and said second shared-communications channel.

10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein said reservation message is also received by a station that always transmits via one shared-communications channel at a time, and wherein said reservation message causes said station to refrain from transmitting until after said third time interval.

11. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said second signal comprises a reservation message ~~for reserving said first shared-communications channel~~ during comprising one or more values defining a third time interval; and wherein said third time interval is after said second time interval; and wherein said transmitter is also for:

transmitting, within said second time interval and after said first signal is transmitted, a third signal over said second shared-communications channel for reserving said second shared-communications channel during said third time interval, and

transmitting, within said third time interval, a fourth signal over the combination of said first shared-communications channel and said second shared-communications channel.

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12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11 wherein said reservation message is also received by a station that always transmits via one shared-communications channel at a time, and wherein said reservation message causes said station to refrain from transmitting until after said third time interval.

13. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

- (a) receiving a first message over a first shared-communications channel, wherein said first message comprises:
  - (i) a notification that said first shared-communications channel has been reserved,
  - (ii) a first time interval ~~associated with subsequent reserving of a second shared-communications channel~~ upon the conclusion of which a first signal is transmitted, and
  - (iii) a second time interval ~~associated with transmitting a first signal~~ upon the conclusion of which the transmission of the first signal over the combination of said first shared-communications channel and said second shared-communications channel is ended, wherein said second time interval is after said first time interval; and
- (b) transmitting, within said first time interval, a second signal over said first shared-communications channel.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein said first message is also received by a station that always transmits via one shared-communications channel at a time, and wherein said notification causes said station to refrain from transmitting until after said second time interval.

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15. (Original) The method of claim 13 further comprising:
- (c) transmitting, after said second time interval, sequentially over each of a plurality of shared-communications channels a respective message for reserving that shared-communications channel; and
  - (d) transmitting a third signal over the combination of said plurality of shared-communications channels.
16. (Original) The method of claim 13 further comprising:
- transmitting, prior to receiving said first message, sequentially over each of a plurality of shared-communications channels a respective message for reserving that shared-communications channel; and
- transmitting a third signal over the combination of said plurality of shared-communications channels.
17. (Original) The method of claim 13 further comprising:
- (c) receiving, during said first time interval, a second message over said second shared-communications channel associated with reserving said second shared-communications channel.
18. (Original) The method of claim 13 further comprising:
- (c) executing, after (a) and prior to (b), a contention-based protocol to gain access to said first shared-communications channel.

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19. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein said second signal comprises a reservation message for reserving said first shared-communications channel during a third time interval that is after said second time interval; said method further comprising:

- (c) transmitting, within said first time interval, a third signal over said second shared-communications channel for reserving said second shared-communications channel during said third time interval, and
- (d) transmitting, within said third time interval, a fourth signal over the combination of said first shared-communications channel and said second shared-communications channel.

20. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein said second signal comprises a reservation message for reserving said first shared-communications channel during a third time interval that is after said second time interval; said method further comprising:

- (c) transmitting, within said second time interval and after said first signal is transmitted, a third signal over said second shared-communications channel for reserving said second shared-communications channel during said third time interval, and
- (d) transmitting, within said third time interval, a fourth signal over the combination of said first shared-communications channel and said second shared-communications channel.